

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SY-05 PER-01 SCCT-01 CU-02 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 PM-04 /081 W

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R 181340Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8640

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1498

PASS ROBERT HOUGHTON AND A/SY/PRS/PIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INS, PINT, LE, SY

SUBJECT: SHOOTING AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

REF: BEIRUT 1465 (NOTAL)

1. A MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE HELD AT 12 NOON TODAY FOR DEAN GHOSN. NO PLANS HAVE YET BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR SERVICES FOR BOB NAJEMY.

2. AFTER TALKING TO DR. KIRKWOOD AND OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED IN INCIDENT INCLUDING SOME WHO WERE HELD HOSTAGE, EMBASSY RE-CONSTRUCTS TRAGIC EVENTS OF YESTERDAY AS FOLLOWS: NAJM NICHOLAS NAJM, A CHRISTIAN PALESTINIAN WITH JORDANIAN NATIONALITY, WAS ONE OF THOSE STUDENTS NOT ALLOWED TO REGISTER IN THE FALL OF 1974 FOLLOWING THE 43- DAY, HIGHLY DESTRUCTIVE STUDENT STRIKE WHICH RUINED THE 1974 SPRING SEMESTER AT AUB.

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3. SOME STUDENTS WITH EXCELLENT ACADEMIC RECORDS WERE

DROPPED AT THAT TIME FOR OUT AND OUT POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND PROVEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRIKE. OTHERS, AND APPARENTLY NAJM WAS ONE SUCH PERSON, WERE INVOLVED POLITICALLY, BUT WERE NOT ALLOWED TO REGISTER ON THE BASIS OF POOR ACADEMIC RECORDS. THE MAIN OFFENDERS CLAIMED TO NUMBER 103 AND BECAME KNOWN BY THIS NUMBER.

4. THE MAJORITY OF THE 103 SEEM TO HAVE LEFT LEBANON TO STUDY ELSEWHERE, INCLUDING ANUMBER WHO ACCEPTED AN IRAQI OFFER OF FREE SCHOLARSHIPS. WHETHER NAJM WENT OUT OF LEBANON AND CAME BACK OR SIMPLY STAYED HERE IS NOT KNOWN, BUT YESTERDAY'S EVENTS BEGAN WITH NAJM ARGUING WITH DEAN GHOSN ON THE STEPS OUTSIDE THE EINGIN- EERING BUILDING OVER HIS RIGHT TO REGISTER AND CONTINUE HIS STUDIES AT AUB. THE CASE HAD APPARENTLY ALREADY BEEN TAKEN SOME WEEKS AGO BY GHOSN TO THE BOARD OF DEANS WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS AND GHOSN TOLD NAJM AS MUCH AND TURNED AWAY. NAJM TAPPED GHOSN ON THE SHOULDER AND WHEN GHOSN TURNED BACK HE WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD. HE LIVED FOR LESS THAN AN HOUR.

5. NAJM IMMEDIATELY RAN FROM THE LOWER CAMPUS TO WEST HALL ON THE UPPER CAMPUS, A DISTANCE OF PERHAPS 350 YARDS, ENTERED THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS AND SHOT HIM IN THE NECK AND CHEST, PROBABLY KILLING HIM INSTANTLY ALTHOUGH RESUSCITATION EFFORTS WERE MADE AT AUB.

6. STILL UNOPPOSED, NAJM WENT ANOTHER 100 YARDS TO COLLEGE HALL AND ENTERED THE THIRD FLOOR SUITE WHICH CONTAINS THE OFFICES OF PRESIDENT KIRKWOOD AND SEVERAL OTHER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS.

7. THE FIRST PERSON NAJM ENCOUNTERED WAS VICE PRESIDENT GEORGE HAKIM. NAJM DEMANDED TO KNOW WHERE DR. KIRKKWOOD WAS AND HAKIM LIED THAT KIRKWOOD WAS OUT OF THE BUILDING AND PURSUKEADED NAJM TO ENTER HAKIM'S OFFICE. NAJM DID AFTER ROUNDING UP ASSISTANT PROVOST CAJOLEAS, ASSISTANT CONTROLLER CONKLIN AND SEVERAL SECRETARIES. THE FAST ACTION OF HAKIM PROBABLY PREVENTED THE FURTHER TRAGEDY

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OF AN ATTEMPT ON KIRKWOOD'S LIFE. AID AFFAIRS OFFICER BALL ARRIVED AT THE SUITE FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR. KIRKWOOD ONLY MINUTES AFTER NAJM BUT WAS WARNED OFF BY A FAST THINKING SECRETARY.

8. BY THIS TIME NAJM WAS OPENLY SHOWING A PISTOL AND A GRENADE AND WAS SEEN TO HAVE ANOTHER GRENADE ON HIS BELT. CAJOLEAS DESCRIBED HIM AS APPEARING QUITE UNBAL-

ANCED.

9. A SHORT TIME AFTER NAJM TOOK HIS HOSTAGES, AUH DOCTOR NAJIB ABU HAYDER, BROTHER OF TMA PRESIDENT MUNIR, ARRIVED ACCOMPANIED BY A YOUNG DOCTOR FRIEND OF NAJM'S, HASSAN SHARIFF. BOTH ABU HAYDER AND SHARIFF HAVE GOOD PALESTINIAN CREDENTIALS, AND ABU HAYDER DID A GREAT DEAL OF THE NEGOTIATING DURING THE 1974 STRIKE. HE IS KNOWN AND TRUSTED BY THE STUDENTS. AGAIN ACCORDING TO CAJOLEAS, UBUHAYDER DID A MAGNIFICENT JOB OF TALKING NAJM INTO RELEASING THE HOSTAGES AND AGREEING TO ACCOMPANY HIM OUT OF THE BUILDING WHICH, BY THIS TIME WAS SWARMING WITH ALL MANNER OF SECURITY FORCES INCLUDING A CONTINGENT OF PALESTINIAN ARMED STUGGLE COMMAND (PASC).

10. THE PLAN WAS APPARENTLY FOR NAJM TO BE TURNED OVER TO SOME ARM OF THE PALESTINIANS, PROBABLY THE MIXED SECURITY FORCE WHICH INCLUDES PLA.

11. IN THE CONFUSION OF TROOPS, NEWSMEN AND BYSTANDERS SURROUNDING NAJM'S DEPARTURE FROM CAMPUS, HE WAS HIMSELF SHOT IN THE SHOULDER BY A YOUNG EMPLOYEE OF GHOSN'S PRIVATE ENGINEERING FIRM, JOSEPH JURBAKAH. JURBAKAH WAS IN TURN SHOT BY A SECURITY MAN REPORTEDLY AN AUB EMPLOYEE.

12. AT SOME POINT WHILE HE WAS HOLDING HOSTAGES, NAJM ASKED TO SPEAK TO NEWSMEN. AN AUB EMPLOYEE SOMETIMES INVOLVED IN PRESS WORK WAS SUMMONED AND GIVEN A STATEMENT IN WHICH NAJM CLAIMED TO BE OPERATING ALONE AND OUT OF REVENGE. AT THIS TIME THE EMBASSY HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT NAJM'S ACTIONS WERE ANYTHING OTHER THAN AS HE STATED.

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13. MORNING PRESS ANNOUNCED THAT THIS CRIME WAS DENOUNCED IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE UNION OF ARAB STUDENTS, THE UNION OF PALESTINIAN STUDENTS- LEBANESE SECTION, AND THE COMMITTEE OF STUDENTS EXCLUDED FROM AUB IN 1974. PRESS ALSO ANNOUNCED NAJM HAS BEEN TURNED OVER TO LEBANESE AUTHORITIES.

14. ASSUME NEA/ARN WILL INFORM AMBASSADOR AND MRS. GODLEY. CHARGE WILL PRESENT AMBASSADOR'S AS WELL AS USG'S AND EMBASSY'S CONDOLENCES IN LETTERS TO PRESIDENT KIRKWOOD AND NEXT OF KIN.
LAMBRAKIS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, TERRORISTS, STUDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT01498
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760061-0341
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760241/aaaabjqr.tel
Line Count: 167
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 1465
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2004 by woolfhd>; APPROVED <18 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHOOTING AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, SY, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006